

Monday, April 6, 1992 O&E

taste buds
chef Larry
Janes

Shop smart to reduce grocery bill

Sure, I clip coupons. Yes, I buy in bulk whenever possible. But saving money at your grocers goes far beyond saving 20 cents on a jar of peanut butter, and buying an 80 load box of detergent instead of a 20 load box.

Without even trying, I can easily cut a minimum of 10 percent from my weekly grocery shopping trip by ripping out coupons from the weekend paper. I'm certainly not a coupon fanatic, but I do get a certain amount of satisfaction seeing the cash register tape subtotal out at a little over \$100, and then watching those coupons credit the tape down to around \$85 dollars plus change.

BUT IN addition to saving money, shopping efficiently also saves time. If there's one thing that really bothers me, it's standing in line for an extra 20 minutes just to save two dollars. Time is money, and the money you save driving around town looking for savings hardly ever equals the return on your investment.

Here are a few of the strategies that yours truly learned from my friend Heloise in her book "All New Hints From Heloise: A Household Guide for the Nineties," (1989, by Heloise, Putnam Publishing Group).

When grocery stores offer double coupons, I check the newspapers for useful coupons, and when I see something I really use, I actually save more money by purchasing another paper, or asking friends and neighbors for unused coupon palliots.

Detergent, cosmetics, razor blades and paper products will last indefinitely, and eventually get used.

If there's one thing I've learned in the 1990s, it is to read packages. I'm always comparing weights, volume, number of servings and costs per ounce or per pound when grocery shopping. I make it a point to shop on Monday mornings when I know the produce and meat are ordered and not sold from the weekend will be marked down.

LAST MONDAY, I picked up some short ribs just one day beyond their prime and made them for dinner that evening, saving myself more than two dollars per pound.

Heloise also suggests that when buying canned goods, the cheapest may not always be the best.

Generic canned vegetables may be all right for soups, stews and casseroles, but may not be as tasty or attractive when served as a separate course for dinner.

SURE, NATIONAL brands are more expensive, but last week, what started out as a potato soup turned into a luscious chowder with the addition of canned corn, a few onions, and some leftover cream from a recent James Gang celebration.

I double couponed some of those refrigerator breadsticks, and doctored them up with some Parmesan cheese and garlic powder, and our salad and dinner cost a whopping two bucks.

A FEW weeks back, one of our local retailers offered an incredible deal on eggs. Not having anywhere near the amount of space to store six dozen eggs, I spent five minutes breaking the eggs into freezer containers.

When the James Gang gets together for their annual Easter brunch, I told momma to put me down for a big egg casserole holding two dozen eggs for which I paid less than 50 cents.

Last, but certainly not least, my most recent savings are coming in through rebates. Three minutes at the rebate wall of my local store netted me about nine dollars after postage using items I knew I had purchased earlier. Nothing monumental here, but the money helped top off the gas tank for the remainder of a busy week.



Neighbors Penny Francis (left) and Kayle Swider clip coupons and talk about the best buys of the week. Francis saves her grocery bags and redeems them at the grocery store.

Savings add up for coupon clippers

By Keely Wygonik
staff writer

OVER THE course of a year, the average shopper will walk 4 1/2 miles behind a grocery cart, said Lois Thelcke, home economist for the Cooperative Extension Service.

A survey by Kraft Light Naturals of 1,000 consumers nationwide found an average shopping trip is 42 minutes.

Grocery shopping requires a lot of time and energy. To get the most from your workout, plan ahead and shop smart.

Mary Bugis of Beverly Hills pulled out all of her coupons when area grocery stores advertised double coupon up to \$1 in November and December. Some stores also offered a free turkey if you bought a certain amount of groceries.

On Nov. 21, Bugis went shopping at Farmer Jack. She redeemed 51 coupons that added up to \$53.46 in savings on a \$153.34 grocery bill and got a free turkey worth \$8.55. Her

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total out-of-pocket expense was \$91.33.

"I cut coupons out every week and save \$20 to \$21 regularly," she said.

"When I heard they were offering double coupon up to \$1, I started a special envelope for coupons over 50 cents. We were having a party so I bought more than I usually do."

Bugis stocked up on coffee, juice, sponges, noodles, paper products, canned goods and other nonperishables. "I'm still using laundry soap that I bought in November," she said.

PENNY FRANCIS of Livonia saves in lots of ways. She clips coupons, which include newspaper coupons for discounts at restaurants like Bill Knapp's, scouts the paper for specials, triple coupon offerings

and double coupons up to \$1 and compares prices.

At the grocery store, she'll ask for a paper bag. "A lot of the stores will give you five cents for every bag you take back," she said. "If I take back four bags, that's 20 cents in my pocket."

Eighty percent of the coupons redeemed are for grocery items. Coffee, detergents, dog food and cereal coupons are redeemed most often, said Thelcke.

To save with coupons, you've got to clip them and organize them; many people don't.

A 1989 survey showed that consumers in the Metro Detroit area took advantage of less than three percent of their potential savings. Clipping coupons adds up to an average savings of \$35 per week times 52 weeks in a year that equals \$1,820.

The average time spent organizing and clipping coupons is one hour. The average number of coupons used per month was 26, but some people used over 100.

A follow-up survey of the state of



the economy and its effect on coupon usage by NCI Promotional Services found that, during the current economic slowdown, consumers consider it essential to increase their coupon use.

Manufacturers distributed 292 billion coupons in 1991, a 4.5 percent increase over 1990.

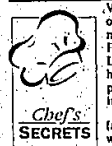
IN RESPONSE, consumers redeemed a record number of coupons last year, 7.46 billion. Consumers have also changed their buying habits.

The study found that over three-fourths of the 500 men and 500 women

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Homey dining Italian chef marks anniversary

By Keely Wygonik
staff writer



Chef's
SECRETS

Vito DePalma, owner of DePalma's at 31735 Plymouth Road in Livonia, works hard to make people feel welcome in his restaurant.

DePalma's is a family place. His wife, Giulia, makes some of the best baked cheesecake topped with strawberries is very popular. Son Paul and daughter Grace also work at the restaurant, managed by Raymond Borden, DePalma's nephew.

While Vito's in the kitchen, Borden is in the dining room making sure guests are comfortable and happy with their meals. The restaurant is celebrating its fourth anniversary with a variety of specials, making it an affordable night out for families on a budget.

There's an "Early Bird Special" served 4-6 p.m. Monday through Friday, priced at \$8.75, which includes dessert, and six anniversary entrees for \$4.95 served 4-6 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Anniversary entrees include a choice of soup or salad, coffee and tea.

Although he received no formal training as a chef, DePalma has been cooking since childhood. He came to this country from Italy at age 14 and learned how to cook from

his parents. "It's all I know," he said.

He worked at different restaurants, country clubs, and hotels before opening his own restaurant, Clairpointe in Grosse Pointe.

He moved to Livonia in 1980, sold the Clairpointe and opened DePalma's in 1988. Everything including the pasta and bread is homemade. Entertainment 7-11 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. For information, reservations, call 261-2430.

Who does the cooking at your house?

"My wife."

What's a normal dinner at your house?

"Down to earth food. Pasta with primavera sauce, good hearty minestrone, assorted cheeses, salad."

What's your favorite food?

"Veal and pasta."

Worst experience as a chef.

"We catered a party and served Chicken Parmesan. It was served in layers in a dish, people thought it was lasagna and took big pieces. They ran out and called for more."

Best experience as a chef

"Being in business for four years at DePalma's. People said we wouldn't make it because there's too much competition. We did."

Favorite herb or spice

Basil.

Name five things in your refrigerator at home.

"Provolone cheese, salami, prosciutto, fruit - oranges, pears and apples, rabini, it's a form of broccoli that tastes in between spinach and broccoli, asparagus, garlic."

Favorite piece of cookware at home, and at work.

"Sauté pan."

If you could cook dinner for anyone, who would it be, what would you serve?

"Lee Iacocca. I would serve an appetizer of fried calamatti, Italian olives and cheeses, Italian egg drop soup, Pasta Campagnola, sautéed veal with a touch of garlic, sun dried tomatoes, prosciutto, black olives, cheese, wine sauce, bouquet of asparagus with red roasted pepper, special homemade torte for dessert."

Money saving tip

Buy a whole chicken, cut it up and freeze it for more than one dinner. Bake the chicken legs with potatoes, carrots, celery and onions for one dish, use the breast for another, save the bones to make a broth for soup.



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

Vito DePalma presents Pasta Campagnola.